



Connecticut General Assembly's Commission on Equity & Opportunity
18-20 Trinity Street, Hartford, Connecticut

**Testimony from Subira Gordon, Executive Director for the
Commission on Equity & Opportunity (CEO)**

Friday, February 24th, 2017 ~ LOB Room 2C – 6:00 PM

In Support of the Governor's Budget Recommendation for the Commission on Equity and Opportunity (CEO)
H.B. No. 7027 *"AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE
THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR."*

Good afternoon Senators Osten & Formica, Rep. Walker and all honorable members of the *Appropriations Committee* of the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA). My name is Subira Gordon, Executive Director for the CGA's Commission on Equity and Opportunity (CEO). I am here today to speak in support of the Governor's Budget Recommendation for the Commission on Equity and Opportunity (CEO) as recommended by H.B. No. 7027 *"An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2019, and Making Appropriations Therefor."*

For the record the mission of the CEO is to inform and engage all policy makers about constituent needs for the African American, Asian American, Pacific Islanders, and Latino and Puerto Rican populations in Connecticut. We are a nonpartisan agency with a data driven, cross-cultural approach to policy innovation and our primary focus is to recommend legislation that aims at eliminating disparities by creating opportunities, building connections and promoting change.

In specific we are mandated to study and make recommendations to the legislature to enhance the economic self-sufficiency, health, safety and education among the communities we serve. In addition – in our advisory capacity – we monitor the administration of state programs that affect the populations served and whenever possible we will make recommendations to our Connecticut lawmakers for new or enhanced policies that enhance programs and/or services that will foster the desired results described herewith. Last but not least, we are mandated to conduct educational and outreach activities intended to raise awareness of critical issues for the populations served and gather and maintain information that can be used to better understand their status, condition and contribution on your behalf.

This mandate, as many of you know, is a new endeavor as a result of the merger of the following underrepresented and underserved populations working under the umbrella of the African-American Affairs Commission, Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission created through SSPA 16-3.

Our budget recommended by the Governor through HB 7027, which I support, includes a reduction of \$28,614 for both FY 2017-2018 and FY 2018-2019 to align budget growth with available resources and a reduction to reflect the continuation of allocated bottom-line lapses contained in Public Act 16-2 (May Special Session).

Since we were formed in July 2017 we have partnered with a significant number of community groups to raise awareness about the issues facing the populations that we represent at the legislature. So far this session my staff and I have worked with a significant number of legislators from both parties to gather research and assist in drafting legislation that will improve the health outcomes of the underserved populations in the state. In the first few weeks of session we have testified on 26 bills in a number of different committees and will continue to weigh in on matters that are important to our constituency. Over the summer and the fall we have



had educational events to fulfill our mandates including but not limited to Hispanic heritage month celebrations, lunar new year events and a black history month tribute to African American legislators who have served in the General Assembly.

The CEO has been an active partner of the Connecticut General Assembly working on a number of issues that are relevant to the three demographic groups both in the legislature and throughout Connecticut with a much leaner budget due to the unfortunate budgetary deficits affecting our state and we are eager to enhance our efforts and commitment to eliminate disparities and work along with Connecticut lawmakers on new projects that augment economic growth but it cautions the legislature that additional reductions to our legislative agency will disproportionately affect our output and therefore urge your support for the Governor's recommendations given by HB No. 7027.

Again thank you for allowing me to comment on the Governor's budget for the agency I represent and I look forward to continuing to work with members of the Appropriations Committee and all the members of the Connecticut General Assembly on innovative ways to move the needle on public policy that will serve all residents in the state.